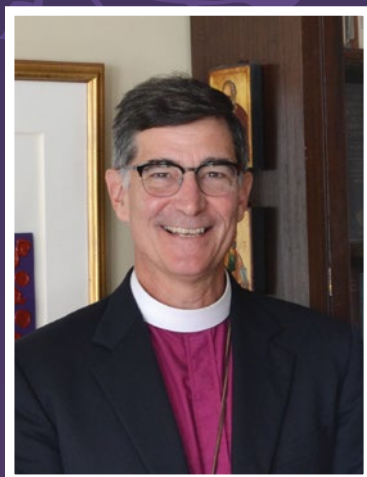




News From The Vine

A Publication From The Episcopal Church of NH



Letter from Bishop Rob

Ever since I was a small child, I've always lamented the day when the Christmas tree came down and the colored and white lights that glowed off the snow outside were shut off. My earliest years were in the cold and snowy towns of Minnesota, and somehow my soul attached the meaning of Christmas with these lights that shone in that deep darkness with the mystery of Jesus coming to be with us in our complicated world.

As I write this we are moving from the bright, festive lights of Christmas decoration to the more contemplative season of Epiphany, a word which means "revelation" or "manifestation," or more simply, "showing." The Magi, having been guided by a great light to pay a visit of respect and adoration to the Son of God in the Baby Jesus, return to their own realms without that light. A friend and poet, Christine Hemp, suggests that the Magi didn't even have the benefit of the old constellations to guide them home, so radically does the Christ child's birth change the universe:

*Everything was
different: constellations no longer*

*pointed out the path. We gave up gazing
at the stars for answers. We were haunted
by a fitful flame wavering inside us.*

"We asked for signs and followed what we saw," Christine Hemp

So, the Christmas trees are on the curb or on a brush pile and the lights are slowly being extinguished. And who could blame us, in this time of political uncertainty — and even rumors of yet more war — if we didn't feel some anxiety, fatigue, disorientation, even exasperation in gazing up at the stars for answers.

But the mystery and wonder are that in each of us light has dawned. We get to pray to the Christ who seeks to dwell within and among us. We get to look to each other in our communities of faith for that hope and courage. The light is no longer merely beyond us out there, but in our hearts. As those sentimental strings of light glowed on the snows, now the light of Christ glows in our prayers, in the words and gestures we exchange with one another, in our acts of kindness, generosity, and concern. These are ways that allow the light of Epiphany to be revealed and manifested. As the great Prologue of the Gospel of John proclaims:

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:3b-5)

The Rev. Jay Sidebotham, the designer of the "RenewalWorks" program that has enriched so many of our congregations in recent years, has observed how an organization, a congregation, or a community will adopt some of the core characteristics of the heart of its leader. Recently I asked a presidential candidate what is in his heart and what aspects of his soul will help our nation heal and flourish. Of course, I have to ask the same question of myself, as every priest, deacon, or lay leader has a powerful effect on the whole local expression of the Body of Christ. How might you respond? Are you guided by

"Letter from Bishop Rob" continued inside...

OUR NEIGHBORS, OURSELVES

A Special Lenten Art Exhibit

Children are naturally attracted to art. They love to draw, paint, and create. The many thousands of immigrant children torn from their parents and held in ICE detention centers along the Mexican border over the past two years are no different. Perhaps the only difference between the children of our friends and family, our children, and our grandchildren, is that their art is proudly displayed on fridges and family bulletin boards. The art of dispossessed children held along the border is thrown in the garbage.

Rescued from the trash heaps, this art has become the Uncaged Art Exhibit, on display at the Centennial Museum of the University of Texas at El Paso. Reproductions of this art are among the many pieces included in an upcoming Lenten season art exhibit titled *Our Neighbors, Ourselves*. The exhibit will be held at St. Peter's Londonderry and is made possible by a grant from the Mission Resources Committee of the Diocese of New Hampshire.

"Immigration at the border is our starting point," said the Rev. Colin Chapman, St. Peter's rector and co-organizer of *Our Neighbors, Ourselves*. "But immigration and the immigrant story is all around us. Much of the focus of the exhibit will be local — telling New Hampshire immigrant stories with drawings, paintings, sculpture, and photography — and then widening the lens."

On Ash Wednesday, February 26, worshippers at St. Peter's will be able to view the exhibit, in the congregation's community room, for the first time at their 7:00 am and 7:00 pm services. The following day, a formal exhibit opening event will take place. In part, the event will also be a fundraiser for the NH Council of Churches, and the nonprofit NH Bail and Bond Fund — a fund that posts bail bonds to free local immigrant detainees from prison while they await their immigration hearing.



Katherine Boss, who co-organized the exhibit while in field placement at St. Peter's, and is a Postulate for Holy Orders reached out to local artists to tell the story, including photographer Becky Fields, sculptor Fr. Samuel Fuller, Nigerian-born painter Segun Olorunfemi, and others to capture a sense of the 21st century immigrant experience in New Hampshire. "Inclusion is a deliberate practice," said Kathy. "It needs to be worked at. Artist statements and speakers will bring knowledge and insight to the viewing of our contemporary immigrant story."

In addition to viewing, awareness, and conversation at the opening event, Rev. Colin and Kathy were encouraged to expand access to the art work and mount a show to run through the Lenten season.

During Lent people will be able to join in an immigration-themed stations of the cross every Friday at 7:00 p.m. and experience the art. On Saturdays, the exhibit will be open to the public from 9:00 am. to 1:00 p.m. Finally, on Thursdays, St. Peter's welcomes author, Terry Ferrish to lead a study on her book *The Good Braider*, the story of a Sudanese family's immigration to Maine, and provide another opportunity to view the art.

"Lent is a profound time for introspection and repentance," said Rev. Colin. "We journey through Lent with a heightened sense of awareness about justice. As we find ourselves resurrected at Easter, we find redemption in serving others. The Lenten season is an ideal time to organize and present this powerful exhibit."

More information about *Our Neighbors, Ourselves* is coming soon. Check St. Peter's website (www.stpeterslondonderry.org/ONO) and look for updates in the Diocese's eNEWS, published every other Tuesday and sent via email. Sign up for eNEWS here: <https://lp.constantcontact.com/su/YFVwNV3>

Exciting Preparations Underway for the School for Ministry

In early December, the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire announced its plans to establish a School for Ministry, based at Trinity Episcopal Church in Tilton, NH. With the appointment of the Rev. Kelly Sundberg Seaman as the school's first Dean of School, work is underway to prepare for a full program launch in the Fall of 2020.

The School for Ministry will offer new pathways for education and training for ministry, including a three-year program of study for those preparing for the priesthood, specific courses of study for licensed ministries, and general faith formation courses.



"I'm inspired by the curiosity and enthusiasm the School is already generating, both inside and outside the Episcopal Church," said the Rev. Kelly Sundberg Seaman. "That says to me that we're responding to a real spiritual hunger, and to a real need for this local mode of forming church leaders."

The School for Ministry will deliver its classes using a low residency, flipped-classroom framework. Students will meet face-to-face one weekend per month at Trinity Episcopal Church. In between, students read, view videos, follow online study guides, and complete assignments on their own — based on their individual schedules.

For both the Priest and Licensed Ministry tracks, curriculum will be largely drawn from the Iona Center at the Seminary of the Southwest. Iona Center curriculum is rigorous, graduate-level coursework, taught with the same content and by the same professors as the courses offered at Seminary of the Southwest. Those who complete the three-year priest formation track will receive a Certificate in Theological Studies from the Seminary of the Southwest.

Rev. Kelly is already hard at work building the school's programs and needed infrastructure. "I am engaged in several productive conversations with experts who have deep knowledge in Christian formation, higher education, clergy and congregational development, and with bi-vocational/'worker' priests, as well as our Iona Collaborative peers."

Other near-term priorities for Rev. Kelly include establishing a calendar for the residential weekends of the school's first academic year, which begins in Fall 2020; planning the school's workshop offerings for Spring Renewal 2020 (Saturday, May 9, 2020, at Manchester Community College — see our related story); and re-imagining the nave at Trinity Tilton to create a flexible space for both worship and learning.

We Need YOUR Feedback! Newsletter Reader Survey

News From the Vine is published four times a year. It requires time, effort, and money to create, print, and mail to almost 6,000 people. The Diocese is strongly committed to expending church resources wisely. To that end, we've included a very brief, postage-paid **Reader Survey** card in this newsletter.

Please fill out the survey, let us know how important (or unimportant) the newsletter is to you, and mail it back to us immediately.

Your reply will help us reflect on the newsletter's value, and what changes, if any, may be needed. The number of reply cards we receive (called a "response rate") will, in itself, help inform us as well.

The survey is anonymous and confidential, so if you care, send in your Reader Survey card today!



JOIN THE ONLINE BOOK GROUP

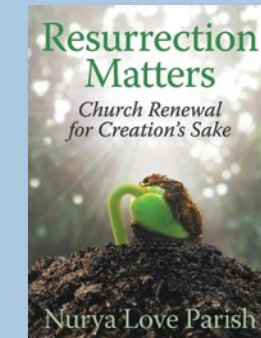
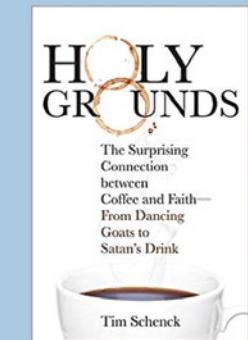
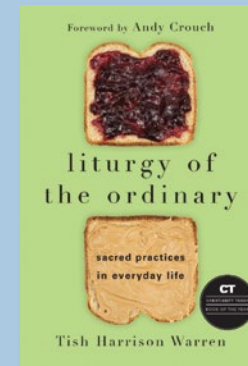
This past Fall, Linnae Peterson of St. Matthew's Goffstown, and coordinator of Formation Network NH, organized and began facilitating an online book group. Linnae has curated several thoughtful and well-written books and facilitated engaging book discussions — through a free, easy-to-use video conference call platform called Zoom. And you're invited!

The books include fiction as well as nonfiction, and local and nationally known authors. Often, the author joins the Zoom meeting too! Recent books the groups have explored include: *Holy Grounds: The Surprising Connection between Coffee and Faith* — from *Dancing Goats to Satan's Drink*; *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life*; and *Addiction Nation: What the Opioid Crisis Reveals About Us*.

Several more books and book group gatherings have been planned in 2020 including *Inventing Hell: Dante, The Bible and Eternal Torment*; *Resurrection Matters: Church Renewal for Creation's Sake*; and the novel, *The Road to Grantchester*.

To join a Zoom group meeting, all you need is a webcam-equipped computer, smart phone, or iPad. The picture and sound are clear and it really feels like you are all together in the same room.

You are welcome to attend one, a few, or all of the group book meetings. For more information, email Linnae at linnae.peterson@gmail.com.



CONVENTION 2019: Resolutions & Next Steps



The operative word for the NH Episcopal Church's 2019 annual convention was "joyful." During worship, Bishop Rob spoke about the purpose of the Church — to know the joy that comes from abiding in God's love and to share that love with our neighbors. Several of the Bishop's Canons spoke about new ministries, new leadership, and a joyful budget. All seven resolutions and five courtesy resolutions were affirmed. The Diocese is also grateful for the many who were elected, and those appointed by the Bishop, to positions to serve and represent the NH Episcopal Church.

As we enter 2020 here's a brief summary of the resolutions passed at convention. Let's ask ourselves, what does this mean for me? My congregation?

Resolutions Passed at Convention:

For full details, read the Diocese' pre-journal convention online at bit.ly/2019ConventionJournal

1. Reorder portions of Canon 3 related to the re-designation of the status of congregations

This resolution reorders the language of Canon 3, Congregations, in ways that (1) lessen the perceived stigma of a parish becoming a mission, and (2) de-couple "transition to mission status" from "impending closure."

2. Re-designation of Congregation Status of Plymouth

This resolution re-designates the Church of the Holy Spirit in Plymouth as a mission congregation in accordance with Canon 3.4.1, and on the request of the Bishop and Standing Committee — a request with which the wardens, vestry, and Rector of that congregation concur.

3. Support for The Episcopal Church in Cuba

This resolution provides opportunities and resources to support La Iglesia Episcopal de Cuba, strengthening our commitment to global partnerships.

4. Exploring Local Racial History and Reconciliation in New Hampshire

This resolution encourages all parishes and missions to carry out the "Tell the Truth" component of the Presiding Officers' invitations in *Becoming Beloved Community: The Episcopal Church's Long-Term Commitment to Racial Healing, Reconciliation and Justice*, and the "Turn and Go" practices of *The Way of Love* as described by the Presiding Officers. We are invited to learn the history of race, slavery, segregation and their legacies of ongoing discrimination and racial inequities in our churches and local communities; and the legend of the repudiated Doctrine of Discovery that has given defense to the oppression, genocide, and continued marginalization of indigenous people.

5. Earth Day at 50: Celebrating Creation in the Easter Season

This resolution acknowledges the importance of care for the earth to disciples of Jesus and to encourage congregations to focus on their connection to their local environment, stewardship of resources and

ecosystems, and the particular challenges of life in the midst of climate disruption by incorporating creation themes into their celebration of the Easter season in 2020.

6. Targeted Reduction of Carbon Emissions in Parishes throughout the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire: 25% by 2025 and 50% by 2035

This resolution works to reduce the carbon footprints of parishes throughout the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire.

7. 2020 Proposed Diocesan Budget

This resolution recommended funding for the Office of the Bishop, mission and programs of the Convention and Council, administration of the diocese, and support of the wider Church.

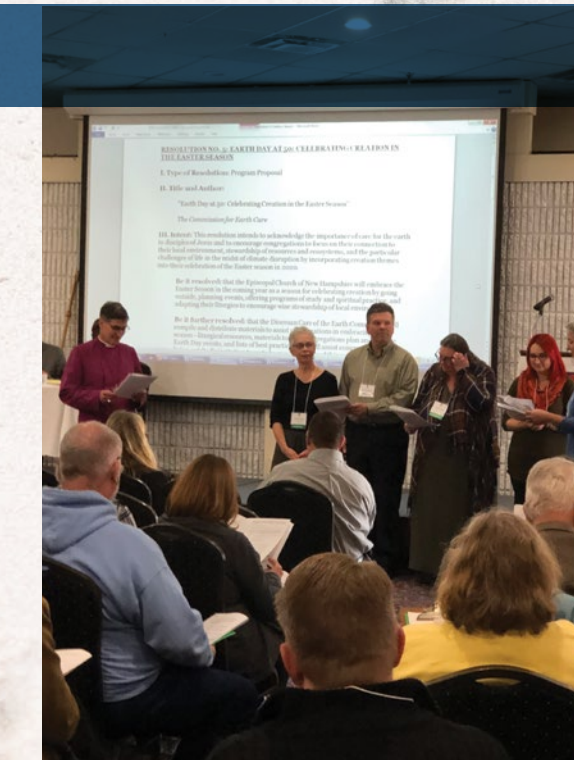
For details, including the full intent and rationale of each resolution, read the Diocese' pre-convention journal, online at bit.ly/2019ConventionJournal

Next Steps

What are steps you can take? How can you help and get involved? Volunteer, offer your resources in support, serve on a committee or work group. Donate your expertise and knowledge. Reflect on each resolution and consider:

- Mark the Easter Season with a focus on the celebration of creation, and recognition of Earth Day's 50th birthday.
- Help plan Earth Day events, and emphasize care for the Earth, as a central focus of programs and events at your church during the Easter season.
- Engage with the leaders of our relationship with the Episcopal Church in Cuba. Volunteer your time, offer much needed support for mission needs, and/or participate in a group trip to Cuba.
- Learn more about racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in your own local church and community. Attend a statewide workshop on best practices in going about researching how to become more aware and appreciative of the history and contributions of African Americans and Indigenous Peoples in your town and church. Discover ways to share stories about what we have learned.
- Make changes in your home and in your church to improve energy efficiency. Help your church transition from fossil fuels to renewables and the generation of onsite renewable energy.

For more information, contact your local parish or call Diocesan House at 603-224-1914.



"Letter from Bishop Rob" continued from front page:

the light of Christ, now drawn so close to us in Jesus? My prayer for all of our presidential candidates and more importantly for us all as the members of the Church of New Hampshire is that we, like the Magi, search for and pay homage to the light of Christ in our hearts. This is the light that can drive away all that may prevent us from sharing God's mending love to the world.

So, let the lights come down from our trees and houses. And instead, may the light in our hearts shine forth with unconquerable faith, hope, and love.

Faithfully Yours in Christ's Light,

The Rt. Rev. Robert Hirschfeld

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Transition Ministry Updates:

• **Celebrations of New Ministry:** The Rev. Michael P.T. Greene was installed October 29, 2019 as Rector of Church of the Good Shepherd in Nashua. On November 20, 2019, The Rev. Kate Harmon Siberine was installed Rector of Grace Church, East Concord.

• The Rev. Celeste Hemingson has been called as Interim Rector of St. George's Durham in addition to her appointment as Chaplain to Retired Clergy.

• The Rev. Kelly Sundberg Seaman is our new Dean for the School for Ministry. Rev. Kelly will be dividing her time as Vicar of St. Mark's and Holy Spirit Churches of Ashland and Plymouth and Dean for the School for Ministry.

• The Rev. Leah Torrey was ordained to the Transitional Diaconate on Saturday, December 14, 2019 at St. Thomas Church in Hanover, and is serving as deacon at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Fairlee, VT.

• The Rev. Stephen Matthew Ekerberg was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons on Saturday January 11, 2020, The Baptism of Our Lord, at St. Paul's Church in Concord, where Steve will serve as deacon.

• **Clergy Newly Licensed in NH:** The Rev. Diane Hovey, Deacon (Diocese of Connecticut) is serving as deacon at St. Peter's Londonderry. The Rev. Nancy Meyers, Deacon (Diocese of Chicago) is serving as deacon at Church of the Good Shepherd Nashua.

• **Curacy positions:** St. Paul's Concord and St. Thomas Hanover are each seeking a curate. Curates are soon to be ordained or newly ordained who wish to continue their priestly formation by serving alongside a seasoned rector. If you happen to know a perfect candidate(s), please contact the Rev. Canon Gail Avery, Canon for Transition and Community Engagement at gavery@nhepiscopal.org.

For more information about ministry transition please contact the Rev. Canon Gail Avery, Canon for Transition and Community Engagement at gavery@nhepiscopal.org.



Coming May 9, 2020

Like New Hampshire's flowering lilacs, Spring Renewal will return in 2020! The annual Diocesan event will be held on May 9, 2020, at Manchester Community College.

Last year, over 200 people from across the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire gathered for a day filled with personal spiritual growth, ministry development, connecting, and renewal. Once again, Spring Renewal will offer an inspiring forum for worship, fellowship, learning, and community. More information will be available soon. In the meantime, please circle your calendar for Saturday, May 9th!

